



Penn State: A Be an 11 Perspective

Personal thoughts on leadership

BY DR. GREG SHEPARD, CEO/FOUNDER BFS

I've started many successful businesses in my life, one being Bigger Faster Stronger. When young entrepreneurs ask me for advice, they often show me their business plans. Business plans are a great idea – in fact, they are critical to success – but there is a big problem if the prospective entrepreneur regards their plan more as a proposal to help generate money from investors than as a working tool to help guide their business so it can grow. Likewise, the Be an 11 program should be thought of as a working tool that coaches can use to help them and their athletes achieve goals.

Penn State has always been considered a model football program, a program without compromise. And its leader, Joe Paterno, has established a legacy in football that will be difficult for anyone to replicate. But the recent scandal at Penn State will leave Coach Paterno's legacy with an asterisk tacked alongside his name.

In the Be an 11 program, the definition of a leader is a person who "does the right thing at the right time" and who is "unafraid of risk." Coaches are leaders, and it is their responsibility to make leaders out of their athletes. Most of the time coaches do the right thing at the right time and are not afraid to do so. But let's look at some of the actions taken by Coach Paterno.

When Coach Paterno first heard of the possibility of a

sexual assault occurring, he did the right thing by reporting it to his superiors. Paterno did what he was legally obligated to do – and which was probably dictated by policy – and he is not being accused of any crime. Even so, I think he should have gone a step further by reporting the incident to the police, as well as following up to ensure that an appropriate investigation was conducted. The serious nature of these charges demanded it.

When the riots occurred after the announcement that Coach Paterno was fired, I can only assume that Paterno's legal advisers told him not to take any action. From a legal standpoint this was probably wise. Myself, I would not have been afraid to take action. I would have grabbed a bullhorn, gone down to the scene of the riots and done what I could to stop the damage to school and personal property.

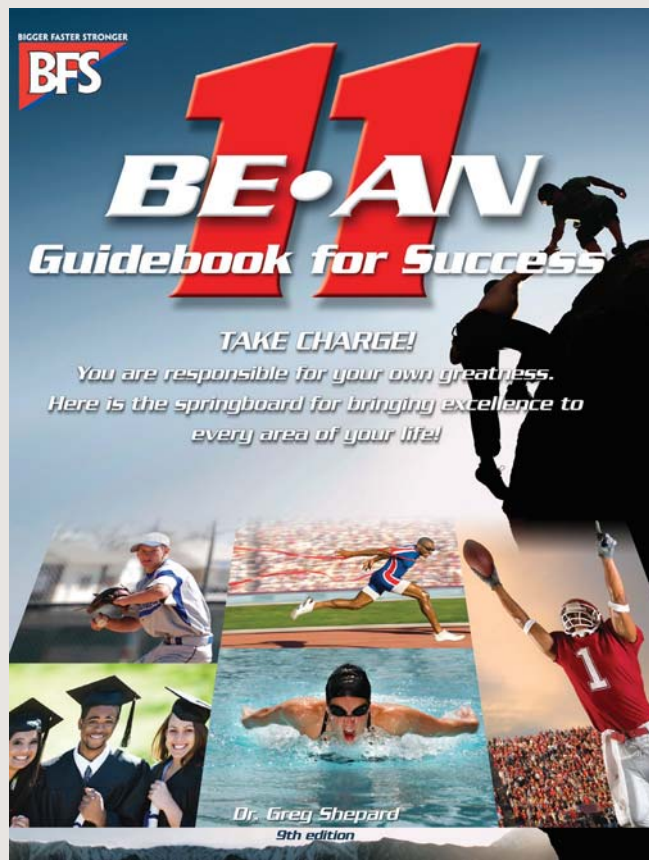
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I would have taken the risk.

I also believe that Paterno should have made a public statement that his first

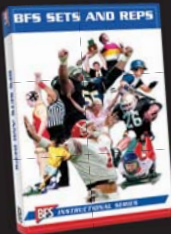
concern was to the alleged victims and their families. And he

also should have said, even if it was just a written statement released to the media, that he would do everything he could to get to the truth. He should have taken the risk to express to the victims and their families that justice would be done. It's what an 11 would do.



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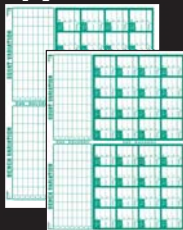


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